

Gun Control Rebellion?

An analysis of trends in handgun manufacturing for domestic sales since implementation of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act

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Introduction

November 1998 was arguably the high water mark for federal gun control in the US. It was then the FBI implemented the National Instant Criminal Background Check System [NICS], a key provision of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993. [Brady Bill]. The NICS is designed to prevent certain prospective purchasers with criminal backgrounds from obtaining firearms.

The Brady Bill may have prevented some handgun violence because of the NICS checks but it did not achieve an implied purpose of reducing handgun purchases. Handgun sales data indicates that it may have unintentionally fed an on going rebellion against gun control by the American people.

Between 1998 and 2010 handgun sales, as indirectly tracked by handgun manufacturing for domestic sales, increased substantially. Sales of small framed concealable pistols, presumably to customers without criminal backgrounds, showed the largest increase in annual sales. The sales accelerated after the 2008 election.

It is not the intention of this report to present arguments for or against gun control legislation. The purpose is to suggest an objective methodology for measuring trends in gun sales and firearm possession for policy makers, using publicly available data and observing impacts of potentially causal events.

Methodology

The analytical technique for this study uses data published annually by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives [ATF]. The Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports compile information submitted to ATF by firearm manufacturers through annual reports required under the provisions 18 U.S.C. Chapter 44, Firearms. The reports for 1998-2010 are shown in Attachment #3. The report for 2004 is excluded from this analysis due to insufficient data resulting from a 74% reporting rate.

The reports list firearms manufactured in the US by type and, for pistols and revolvers, by caliber. The reports also reveal the number of exported firearms by type.

The basic assumption for this study is that firearm manufacturing is market driven and manufactures produce guns annually to replace sold inventory and to meet expected demand for their products.

Therefore the trajectory of firearm sales should parallel closely the quantities of guns manufactured over a period of years.

Firearms produced for domestic sales are calculated by subtracting exports from manufacturing totals.

The trend analysis for small frame concealable handgun sales is calculated by examining production of .380 caliber pistols. This weapon is not suitable for target shooting or hunting. It is not issued to US police or military. It is produced almost exclusively in the US in small frame cancelable models for personnel defense.

Changes in manufacturing of .380 caliber pistols should therefore be a reliable barometer of trends in small frame cancelable handgun sales.

Annual production of .380 caliber pistols along with annual manufacturing of handguns for domestic sale is shown in Attachment #1. For comparison purposes annual quantities for domestic rifle sale production are listed in Attachment #2.

Findings

The following trends are concluded from an analysis of the ATF reports:

1. Annual manufacturing of handguns for domestic sale increased by 219% between 1998 and 2010 since implementation of the NICS requirement of the Brady Bill. This is greater than the 137% annual increase in rifle sales for the same period. [A 171% increase in 2009 figures].
2. Annual manufacturing of small concealable handguns for sale rose by 667% between 1998 and 2010.
3. Caliber .380 pistols represented 6.6% of total handgun sales in 1999 and increased to 24.2% by 2010.
4. Annual firearm production and sales decreased during the 2001 economic recession but did not slow down during the deeper and longer 2008-2009 global economic recession. This maybe the result of the effect of the election of 2008 and a perceived threat to gun ownership the election represented.
5. Annual gun production and sales increased at greater rates following the 2008 election.

Handgun, and particularly small concealable handgun production and sales saw dramatic increases in the years following implementation of the Brady Bill and were accelerated after the 2008 election. The clear lesson for policy makers is that Americans can rebel against gun control measures or perceived threats to firearm ownership, and that attempts to legislate or regulate firearms without wide support from gun owners are likely to be counter productive.

The methodology used in this study, although not an exact count of actual gun purchases, can be utilized as an objective and transparent technique for future studies of trends in annual US firearm sales.

Attachment #1

Handgun Manufacturing for Domestic Sales 1998-2010

Year	.380 Caliber	Total Handguns	Causal Event
1998	98,266	1,239,430	Brady Bill NICS
1999	81,981	1,247,951	
2000	108,881	1,205,095	
2001	41,634	882,166	Economic recession
2002	59,476	1,031,542	
2003	79,788	1,078,160	
2005	107,386	1,029,163	
2006	126,939	1,230,430	
2007	138,484	1,531,283	
2008	278,945	1,736,789	Election
2009	390,897	2,326,674	
2010	655,512	2,716,050	

Source: Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Attachment #2

Rifle Manufacturing for Domestic Sales 1998-2010

Year	Total Rifles	Causal Event
1998	1,280,092	
1999	1,534,016	
2000	1,533,400	
2001	1,233,869	Economic recession
2002	1,454,642	
2003	1,367,802	
2004	Omitted	
2005	1,338,674	
2006	1,393,676	
2007	1,530,329	
2008	1,641,595	Election
2009	2,187,779	
2010	1,754,038	

Source: Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Exporting Reports, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Attachment #3

Annual Firearms Manufacturing and Export Reports

1998-2010

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 1998

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

TO .22	184,836
TO .25	50,936
TO .32	62,338
TO .380	98,266
TO 9MM	284,374
TO .50	279,615

TOTAL

960,365

REVOLVERS

TO .22	68,108
TO .32	2,602
TO .39 SPEC	77,289
TO .357 MAG	73,905
TO .44 MAG	64,236
TO .50	38,250

TOTAL

324,390

RIFLES

1,345,899

SHOTGUNS

1,036,520

MACHINE GUNS

32,866

ANY OTHER WEAPON

645

MISC. FIREARMS

24,506

EXPORTED

PISTOLS

29,537

REVOLVERS

15,788

RIFLES

65,807

SHOTGUNS

89,699

MACHINE GUNS

12,529

ANY OTHER WEAPON

23

MISC. FIREARMS

2,513

**AMENDED 3-08-2000 BY NES
RIFLE & SHOTGUN TOTALS CHANGE**

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FIREARMS, INCLUDING SEPARATE FRAMES OR RECEIVERS, ACTIONS OR
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DURING THE CALENDAR YEAR.

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 1999

MANUFACTURED**PISTOLS**

TO .22	229,852	TO .22	80,140
TO .25	24,393	TO .32	5,844
TO .32	52,632	TO .39 SPEC	86,356
TO .380	81,881	TO .357 MAG	68,174
TO 9MM	270,298	TO .44 MAG	55,957
TO .50	336,390	TO .50	39,313
TOTAL	995,446	TOTAL	335,784

RIFLES	1,569,685
SHOTGUNS	1,106,995
MACHINE GUNS	22,490
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	15,277
MISC. FIREARMS	39,837

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	34,663
REVOLVERS	48,616
RIFLES	65,669
SHOTGUNS	67,342
MACHINE GUNS	22,255
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	2,955
MISC. FIREARMS	4,028

2-8-2001 BY NES

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2000

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

REVOLVERS

TO .22	184,577	TO .22	79,472
TO .25	23,198	TO .32	1,598
TO .32	60,527	TO .39 SPEC	59,339
TO .380	108,523	TO .357 MAG	81,017
TO 9MM	277,176	TO .44 MAG	46,931
TO .50	308,900	TO .50	50,603
TOTAL	962,901	TOTAL	318,960

RIFLES	1,583,042
SHOTGUNS	898,442
MACHINEGUNS	47,400
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	32,269
MISC. FIREARMS	30,196

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	28,636
REVOLVERS	48,130
RIFLES	49,642
SHOTGUNS	35,087
MACHINE GUNS	11,719
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	4,114
MISC. FIREARMS	11,132

PREPARED BY NES 3/11/02

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2001

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS	REVOLVERS
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TO .22	123,374	TO .22	77,433
TO .25	5,697	TO .32	5,003
TO .32	57,823	TO .39 SPEC	85,628
TO .380	41,634	TO .357 MAG	50,120
TO 9MM	213,378	TO .44 MAG	39,515
TO .50	184,930	TO .50	62,444
TOTAL	626,836	TOTAL	320,143

RIFLES	1,284,554
SHOTGUNS	679,813
MACHINEGUNS	56,367
ALL OTHER NFA WEAPONS	25,524
MISC. FIREARMS	21,309

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	32,151
REVOLVERS	32,662
RIFLES	50,685
SHOTGUNS	46,174
MACHINE GUNS	10,021
ALL OTHERNFA WEAPONS	8,334
MISC. FIREARMS	10,939

PREPARED BY NES 1/23/03

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2002

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS		REVOLVERS	
TO .22	144,722	TO .22	86,806
TO .25	10,009	TO .32	17,599
TO .32	53,999	TO .357 MAG	95,570
TO .380	59,476	TO .38 SPEC	51,472
TO 9MM	205,197	TO .44 MAG	46,080
TO .50	268,111	TO .50	49,543
TOTAL	741,514	TOTAL	347,070
RIFLES	1,515,286		
SHOTGUNS	741,325		
MISC. FIREARMS	21,700		

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	22,555
REVOLVERS	34,187
RIFLES	60,644
SHOTGUNS	31,897
MISC. FIREARMS	1,473

PREPARED BY NES 1/08/04

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2003

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS	REVOLVERS
TO .22	189,785
TO .25	10,987
TO .32	43,471
TO .380	79,788
TO 9MM	219,668
TO .50	267,961
TOTAL	811,660
TO .22	108,518
TO .32	3,928
TO .357 MAG	59,591
TO .38 SPEC	57,078
TO .44 MAG	46,533
TO .50	33,716
TOTAL	309,364
RIFLES	1,430,324
SHOTGUNS	726,078
MISC. FIREARMS	30,978

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	16,340
REVOLVERS	26,524
RIFLES	62,522
SHOTGUNS	29,537
MISC. FIREARMS	6,989

PREPARED BY NES 3/31/05

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2004 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS	REVOLVERS
TO .22	211,473
TO .25	10,140
TO .32	32,435
TO .380	68,291
TO 9MM	182,493
TO .50	223,679
TOTAL	728,511
TO .22	88,570
TO .32	3,446
TO .357 MAG	62,640
TO .38 SPEC	54,842
TO .44 MAG	35,097
TO .50	49,504
TOTAL	294,099
RIFLES	1,325,138
SHOTGUNS	731,769
MISC. FIREARMS	19,508

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	14,959
REVOLVERS	24,122
RIFLES	62,403
SHOTGUNS	31,025
MISC. FIREARMS	7,411

PREPARED BY NES 1/18/06

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** TOTALS ARE FOR 74% OF MANUFACTURERS. 26% DIDN'T FILE REPORTS.

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2005 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS	REVOLVERS
TO .22	139,178
TO .25	10,455
TO .32	29,024
TO .380	107,386
TO 9MM	299,681
TO .50	217,701
TOTAL	803,425
TO .22	63,333
TO .32	2,297
TO .357 MAG	68,476
TO .38 SPEC	68,785
TO .44 MAG	25,802
TO .50	45,512
TOTAL	274,205
RIFLES	1,431,372
SHOTGUNS	709,313
MISC. FIREARMS	23,179

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	19,196
REVOLVERS	29,271
RIFLES	92,098
SHOTGUNS	46,129
MISC. FIREARMS	7,988

PREPARED BY EYR 01/29/2008

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2006 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS		REVOLVERS	
TO .22	141,651	TO .22	84,452
TO .25	9,625	TO .32	2,242
TO .32	39,197	TO .357 MAG	99,562
TO .380	126,939	TO .38 SPEC	85,321
TO 9MM	352,383	TO .44 MAG	54,308
TO .50	351,465	TO .50	56,184
TOTAL	1,021,260	TOTAL	382,069
RIFLES	1,496,505		
SHOTGUNS	714,618		
MISC. FIREARMS	35,872		

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	144,779
REVOLVERS	28,120
RIFLES	102,829
SHOTGUNS	57,771
MISC. FIREARMS	34,022

PREPARED BY EYR 01/29/2008

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2007 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS	REVOLVERS
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TO .22	180,419	TO .22	91,963
TO .25	11,361	TO .32	3,509
TO .32	43,914	TO .357 MAG	93,320
TO .380	138,484	TO .38 SPEC	104,498
TO 9MM	391,312	TO .44 MAG	46,719
TO .50	454,174	TO .50	51,325

TOTAL	1,219,664	TOTAL	391,334
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RIFLES 1,610,923

SHOTGUNS 645,231

MISC. FIREARMS 55,461

MANUFACTURER'S EXPORTED

PISTOLS 45,053

REVOLVERS 34,662

RIFLES 80,594

SHOTGUNS 26,949

MISC. FIREARMS 17,524

PREPARED BY EYR 1/30/2009

Revised 5/24/2010

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2008 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

REVOLVERS

TO .22	195,633	TO .22	115,511
TO .25	14,586 #	TO .32	6,681
TO .32	40,485	TO .357 MAG	105,944
TO .380	278,945	TO .38 SPEC	133,621
TO 9MM	421,746	TO .44 MAG	31,135
TO .50	435,876 #	TO .50	38,861

TOTAL

1,387,271 #

TOTAL

431,753

RIFLES 1,746,139 #

SHOTGUNS 630,710 #

MISC. FIREARMS 102,324 #

EXPORTED

PISTOLS 54,030

REVOLVERS 28,205

RIFLES 104,544

SHOTGUNS 41,186

MISC. FIREARMS 523

PREPARED BY TBD 03/08/2011

REVISED 1/14/10 REPORT

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REVISIONS WERE MADE TO FIREARMS TOTAL PRODUCTION

ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2009 **

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS		REVOLVERS	
TO .22	320,697	TO .22	141,840
TO .25	15,053	TO .32	7,590
TO .32	47,396	TO .357 MAG	107,834
TO .380	390,897	TO .38 SPEC	232,339
TO 9MM	586,364	TO .44 MAG	29,967
TO .50	507,851	TO .50	27,625
TOTAL	1,868,258	TOTAL	547,195
RIFLES	2,248,851		
SHOTGUNS	752,699		
MISC. FIREARMS	138,815		

EXPORTED

PISTOLS	56,402
REVOLVERS	32,377
RIFLES	61,072
SHOTGUNS	36,455
MISC. FIREARMS	8,438

PREPARED BY EYR 1/20/2011

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ANNUAL FIREARMS MANUFACTURING AND EXPORT REPORT

YEAR 2010 *

MANUFACTURED

PISTOLS

REVOLVERS

TO .22	374,505	TO .22	131,543
TO .25	21,722	TO .32	8,605
TO .32	39,792	TO .357 MAG	126,525
TO .380	665,512	TO .38 SPEC	210,762
TO 9MM	630,217	TO .44 MAG	45,361
TO .50	526,702	TO .50	36,131

TOTAL

2,258,450

TOTAL

558,927

RIFLES 1,830,556 #

SHOTGUNS 743,378

MISC. FIREARMS 67,929

EXPORTED

PISTOLS 80,041

REVOLVERS 25,286

RIFLES 76,518

SHOTGUNS 43,361

MISC. FIREARMS 16,771

PREPARED BY TBD 1/30/2012

REPORT DATA AS OF 1/30/2012

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REVISIONS WERE MADE TO FIREARMS TOTAL